

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EDITORIAL IN THE IRISH INDEPENDENT, JULY 10, 1978

FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN THE IRISH INDEPENDENT,
JULY 10, 1978 UNDER THE HEADING RUSSIANS ON TRIAL.

PRESIDENT CARTER'S DENUNCIATION OF THE TRIALS OF SOVIET
DISSIDENTS, WHICH START TODAY, HIGHLIGHTS THE
SERIOUS VIEW WHICH IS BEING TAKEN IN THE U.S. AND
ELSEWHERE OF THE UTTER INDIFFERENCE WITH WHICH THE
SOVIET GOVERNMENT IS TREATING THE HELSINKI PACT. FOR
SHCHARANSKY AND GINSBERG, NO MATTER WHAT THE SOVIETS
SAY, ARE GUILTY OF NOTHING MORE THAN TRYING TO GET THE
RUSSIANS TO STICK TO A PACT WHICH THEY SOUGHT AND
SIGNED THEMSELVES.

THE SITUATION FOR SHCHARANSKY IS SERIOUS: HE IS ACCUSED
OF SPYING, WHICH COULD GET HIM THE DEATH SENTENCE, STILL
IN USE IN THE SOVIET UNION. AND IT SEEMS MORE THAN
LIKELY THAT THE TRIAL WILL BE THE USUAL SECRET ONE WITH
NO ROOM FOR FOREIGN OBSERVERS OR EVEN THE RELATIVES AND
FRIENDS OF THE ACCUSED. ONLY A CROWD OF STOOGES WILL BE
ALLOWED IN TO SEE PROCEEDINGS WHICH HAVE ALMOST BEEN
PRE-ARRANGED, AS FAR AS THE OUTCOME IS CONCERNED.

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ABOUT THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT IT CAN ONLY BE SAID THAT THE
WEST WAS AS NAIVE AS IT ALWAYS IS WHEN IT COMES TO DEALING
WITH THE RUSSIANS. THE IDEA THAT A COMMUNIST STATE,
MONOLITHIC AND WITHOUT A PUBLIC OPINION TO INFLUENCE IT,
WOULD ALLOW ITS POSITION TO BE UNDERMINED BY HANDING OUT
SUCH FREEDOMS AS THE RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH, COMMENT AND
TRAVEL IS LUDICROUS, AND OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN SEEN AS

SUCH BY THE WORLD'S DIPLOMATS WHO ATTENDED THE HELSINKI NEGOTIATIONS. FOR REASONS WHICH WILL ALWAYS ESCAPE THE COMPREHENSION OF THE MAJORITY THEY WENT AHEAD AND SIGNED A DOCUMENT WHICH WAS NO MORE THAN THEIR AGREEMENT TO THE PERMANENT PARTITION OF EUROPE.

EVEN IF SHCHARANSKY WAS A SPY, THE RUSSIANS' WAY OF TREATING HIM IS AT ODDS WITH THE WESTERN MANNER OF HANDLING THE COUNTLESS SOVIET SPIES DISCOVERED IN THE WEST EVERY YEAR. WEST GERMANY DISCOVERS THEM BY THE HUNDREDS, AND FEW COUNTRIES IN THE REST OF THE WORLD HAVE NOT COME ACROSS A SOVIET SPY MASQUERADING AS A JOURNALIST, DIPLOMAT OR TRADE OFFICIAL. EVEN WHEN NATIONALS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES DISCOVER A SPY IN THEIR MIDST THEY DO NOT PUT HIM UP ON A CHARGE WHICH COULD LEAD TO THE DEATH PENALTY.

AND IN CASE WE THINK THAT DISSIDENCE IS RESTRICTED TO A FEW BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN IN THE SOVIET UNION LET'S REMEMBER THAT MANY GROUPS OF SOVIET CITIZENS ARE DENIED RIGHTS WHICH ARE CONSIDERED ELEMENTARY IN THE WEST. ON THE RELIGIOUS FRONT THERE IS NOT AN ORGANISED BRANCH OF CHRISTIANITY OR MOHAMMEDANISM WHICH DOES NOT FEEL THE WEIGHT OF THE SOVIET SECURITY SYSTEM ON ITS SHOULDERS. THE UNDERGROUND LITERATURE TESTIFIES TO THAT. EVEN CURRENT EVENTS IN THE SOVIET UNION SHOW THAT A FORCE

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AS BASIC AS NATIONALISM IS THE SUBJECT OF CONSTANT ATTENTION FROM THE CENTRAL AUTHORITIES. AND WHEN WILL THE DAY DAWN WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL SOVIET CITIZEN CAN CONFIDENTLY SET ABOUT MAKING A TOURIST TRIP TO THE WEST WITHOUT KNOWING IN ADVANCE THAT HE HASN'T A GHOST OF A CHANCE OF GETTING THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION?

SHCHARANSKY AND OTHERS LIKE HIM HAVE FOUGHT TO SECURE NO MORE FROM THEIR GOVERNMENT THAN IT PROMISED TO DELIVER AT HELSINKI. FOR THAT THEY ARE HARRIED AND CHASED - AND TRIED. IT IS TIME THE WEST FOUND WAYS MORE BITING THAN A FEW CURT WORDS FROM A STATESMAN TO SHOW ITS DISPLEASURE.

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